

Washington, DC- Today, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez made the following remarks at the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution Oversight Hearing entitled "The Voting Rights Act: Evidence of Continued Need." Sánchez spoke about the recent reports released by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights on the importance of not only renewing but strengthening Sections 5 & 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

"Thank you, Chairman Chabot and Ranking Member Nadler, for convening this vital hearing on the "Evidence of Continued Need of the Voting Rights Act." I also want to thank the witnesses and their respective organizations for their extensive reports on the importance of reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act and the need for preserving its safeguards.

"A recent Roll Call article quoted Chairman Sensenbrenner during the 1982 VRA reauthorization hearings, as saying, "The testimony amply demonstrated that the ingenuity of the human mind is limitless when it comes to devising ways to rig election systems to favor certain candidates or points of view."

"The Chairman's comments would be equally appropriate today. The NEED to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act - especially the language assistance provisions in Section 203 and the pre-clearance provisions in Section 5 - is as great today as it was when Chairman Sensenbrenner made his remarks in 1982.

"The testimony we heard during the VRA hearings last fall and the conclusions found by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the American Civil Liberties Union's reports provide undeniable evidence that the Voting Rights Act is still required to prevent voter suppression and ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to cast their vote.

"As a Member of Congress representing a Congressional district with a substantial Latino and Asian population, I have first hand knowledge of the power of the Voting Rights Act. My district has been covered by Section 203 since 2000. I can tell you, the Lawyers' Committee and ACLU reports confirm what I've seen in my precincts for years. The language-assistance provisions are still needed to protect many citizens' voting rights.

"The Lawyers' Committee and ACLU reports also confirm that Latino voters continue to suffer from discriminatory voting obstacles. As recently as last June, the Department of Justice sued the city of Boston for discouraging Hispanics from voting.

"Additionally, there are confirmed cases nationwide of election officials, in jurisdictions covered by Section 203, simply ignoring their legal requirement to provide language assistance. This is not only wrong it is against the law.

"I strongly believe the testimony and reports submitted in favor of reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act are compelling. They prove beyond a doubt that the VRA not only needs to be reauthorized but strengthened.

"I appreciate Chairman Chabot and Ranking Member Nadler's courtesy of allowing me to join

the Constitution Subcommittee again today."